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UNCLAS BRATISLAVA 000684

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA POLITICAL ROUNDUP JULY 19, 2004

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED -- PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

Slovakia Prepared to Train Iraqi Police; Awaiting Invite

11. (SBU) The Slovak military police have prepared a two to three month training plan for about twenty Iraqi policemen at the military academy in Liptovsky Mikulas. MOD Desk Officer for the United States, Jan Hradisky, said the military academy is ready now; they are just awaiting a request from the Iraqis.

Justice for Rom after 4-year Delay

12. (SBU) After four years of proceedings, Slovak courts convicted Michal S., of severe physical assault against Alojz Oracka, a 23-year-old Rom. Michal S. was found guilty of attempted murder and theft, but was found innocent of committing a hate crime. He was sentenced to ten years in prison and must undergo treatment for alcoholism. He must also pay Oracka 430,000 SK (USD 13,350) for lost wages and long-term disability. Oracka was attacked in March 2000 following a verbal conflict with Michal S. The defendant attacked Oracka with a stick and repeatedly kicked him. Oracka suffered severe head injuries that left him unable to work. (Note: Slovak authorities do not release full names of defendants.)

Charges of Vote Buying; People's Union (LU) Collapses

13. (SBU) Poloffts met with Vojtech Tkac on 8 July to discuss the disintegration of the club of independent MPs and the status of the People's Union (LU) party. According to Tkac, LU party discipline was almost non-existent and at least one deputy admitted to receiving money from the coalition for his vote. Tkac added that Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda, Minister of Economy Pavol Rusko, and Slovak Nationalist Party member and mayor of Zilina Jan Slota had enormous influence within LU. Tkac said that he planned to join Robert Fico's Smer party in the future.

14. (SBU) In a separate meeting on 8 July Rudolf Ziak, unaffiliated Member of Parliament, claimed the LU ceased to exist when he left the party. Ziak added that he was currently negotiating with President Ivan Gasparovic to represent the Democratic People's Movement (HZD) in parliament as an independent MP. Ziak commented that he believes that Gasparovic will be a good president for Slovakia, having known him since their days in Vladimir Meciar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS). He does not believe that Gasparovic will be beholden to Smer or easily influenced by others.

Euroskepticism Among MPs

15. (SBU) Poloffts met with Jozef Miklusicak of the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and Peter Missik of the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKU) in early July. Both MPs were very critical of the EU constitution, claiming that it gives too much power to bureaucrats in Brussels. Missik, however, did not agree with Miklusicak on the KDH's call for a referendum on the EU constitution. Rudolf Ziak also told poloffts that Slovakia must remain vigilant that small countries remain sufficiently represented in the EU.

Politicians Debate Swedish Priest's Comments on Homosexuality

16. (U) A Swedish court decision to sentence Pentecostal Church pastor Aake Green to a month in prison for calling homosexuals an "abnormal cancerous tumor in the body of society" had repercussions in Slovakia. Interior Minister Vladimir Palko and his Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) colleagues said it was a case where "anti-discrimination legislation causes persecution of people." National Council of the Slovak Republic [NRSR] Chairman Pavol Hrusovsky viewed the Swedish court's verdict as an unforgivable precedent violating freedom of speech. Justice Minister Daniel Lipsic said the decision threatens freedom of speech. According to Palko, Europe is starting to put people in jail because they are speaking their mind. On July 13, Palko told Swedish Ambassador Cecilia Julin that he disapproved of the sentence given to the priest.

17. (U) Several politicians criticized Palko and KDH. Jozef Banas of SDKU, said that parliament should examine KDH's activities abroad. The New Citizen's Alliance (ANO) party argued that Palko's move could impair Slovak-Swedish relations. NGOs protested against KDH's statements and requested Palko's and Lipsic's resignation. However, a group of about thirty conservative intellectuals declared their support for the KDH.

18. (SBU) This incident will blow over soon, but illustrates how the KDH is shifting ideologically towards more conservative positions, reaching out to older and religiously conservative voters. As a result, many pro-reform and pro-democratic voters may be reluctant to support KDH, no matter how well its ministers are doing in their posts.

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